Approved for Release: 2022/07/15 C06935722

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

Sadeq QOTBZADEH — IRAN
(Phonetic: GAWTBzaDEH)

Minister of Foreign Affairs (since 28 November 1979)

Addressed as:
Mr. Minister

The ruling Revolutionary Council (RC) appointed one of its members, hardliner Sadeq Qotbzadeh, to replace Abol Hasan Bani-Sadr, who had overseen the Foreign Ministry for only three weeks. (Bani-Sadr, who remains Economic Affairs and Finance Minister, probably was replaced because of his attempts to reach some sort of compromise with the United States.) Qotbzadeh continues to supervise the regime's major propaganda medium, the National Iranian Radio and Television Organization (NIRTO), a function he has performed since the February 1979 revolution. (b)(3)

Active in the anti-Shah movement for over 25 years, Qotbzadeh spent much of that time in exile and was one of those who played an important role in bringing Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to power. The ambitious Qotbzadeh seems to have attained increased importance by becoming a member of the Cabinet (b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(1) It has become increasingly evident that Khomeini and the clergymen closest to him make the important decisions. Qotbzadeh is likely to adopt a tough posture toward the United States in any negotiations or other relationships, but it will probably be the ayatollahs in the RC who will tell him how and when to act. (b)(3)

Qotbzadeh has been unpopular at NIRTO. He has forced leftist staff members to follow the propaganda themes of the Islamic revolution and has removed over a hundred who balked. He has irritated many Iranians by banning all entertainment programs and substituting speeches by

30NOV79

(cont.)

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

Approved for Release: 2022/07/15 C06935722

Approved for Release: 2022/07/15 C06935722

[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

religious and government figures interspersed with patriotic songs. In March 1979 two women's rights activists, angered by NIRTO reporting on feminist issues, attacked him while he was riding in a car; one of the women shot at him but missed. [redacted] (b)(3)

Professional Revolutionary

Born into a middle-class merchant family, Qotbzadeh is the youngest of three brothers; neither of his brothers holds office in the regime. As a youth he was the most religious member of his family. He did have a brief flirtation with Marxism, but he returned, at least outwardly, to a militantly Islamic orientation. Qotbzadeh received some of his early education in Tehran and some in Canada. Along the way, he became a member of the anti-Shah National Front and a follower of Prime Minister (1951-53) Mohammad Mosadeq. After Mosadeq's fall, Qotbzadeh was imprisoned for anti-government activities. When he was released in 1959, he came to the United States to continue his studies and agitate against the Shah. Along with Ebrahim Yazdi (Foreign Minister from May to early November 1979) and Mostafa Chamran (now Minister of National Defense), he founded the Islamic Students Association of the United States. [redacted] (b)(3)

Qotbzadeh may have attended the University of California at Berkeley for a short time, but he eventually ended up at the School of Foreign Service of Georgetown University in Washington, where he studied languages. While there he frequently had hostile verbal exchanges with Ardeshir Zahedi, then the Shah's son-in-law and Ambassador to the United States. After one of these confrontations, Qotbzadeh told the press, "sooner or later the future will be in our hands." In 1961 the Iranian Government lifted his passport. Expelled from Georgetown for missing too many classes--because of illness, he says--he was deported from this country in 1964, an action he blames on the Shah. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

Qotbzadeh subsequently traveled in the Middle East and Africa and established contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization. [redacted] (b)(3)

Eventually making his home in France, Qotbzadeh became active in the International Confederation of Iranian Students; he was later expelled because of his differences with its

[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

Approved for Release: 2022/07/15 C06935722

Approved for Release: 2022/07/15 C06935722

[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

leftist elements. Once or twice a year, he went to Najaf, Iraq, to visit the exiled Khomeini. Qotbzadeh occupied a leadership position in the Union of Iranian Students in France until he began to play a more active role in the group around Khomeini. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

[redacted] When the ayatollah left Iraq in October 1978 to go to France, Qotbzadeh accompanied him. He subsequently became one of Khomeini's spokesmen and principal aides, and he returned to Iran with him on 1 February 1979. [redacted] (b)(3)

Personal Data

[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

[redacted] Qotbzadeh likes to wear fashionable suits, silk ties and loafers. An enthusiastic talker, he speaks fluent English and French and a little Arabic. His full name is Qotbzadeh-Esfahani, but he does not use that form.

[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

30 November 1979

[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

Approved for Release: 2022/07/15 C06935722